

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

**Steve Stern**

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR  
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT  
1842 E. Jericho Tpke. Suite P  
HUNTINGTON, NY 11743



## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: **Deborah Harris**  
LEGISLATIVE AIDE  
OFFICE: 631-854-5100  
deborah.harris@suffolkcountyny.gov

### LEGISLATOR STERN CALLS ON STATE LAWMAKERS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS

*Joins with Parents for Megan's Law in Call for Albany Special Session*



Legislator Steve Stern joins Laura Ahearn, Executive Director, Parents for Megan's Law, and other State and County elected officials in leading the call for our NY lawmakers to go back to Albany immediately to enact the legislation necessary to protect our children from sexual predators.

**HUNTINGTON, NY** –Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington) 16<sup>th</sup> LD, co-sponsor of the most aggressive legislation in the nation to protect our children from sexual predators, joined with Laura Ahearn, Executive Director of Parents for Megan's Law, County Legislators, State Lawmakers and community residents to call on State representatives to return to Albany for a Special Session to restore the ability of local lawmakers to protect our children from sex offenders. Earlier this year, the highest court in the state, the New York State Court of Appeals, struck down all county residency restrictions, leaving our communities at risk.

“A Level 3 sex offender, who spent more than three years in prison in Wyoming on a child pornography conviction, recently moved just three doors down from an elementary school in Dix Hills. This would not have happened had the numerous protections that the Suffolk County Legislature put in place remained in place,”

Legislator Stern said. “In addition, on January 1, 2016, registration requirements for thousands of Level 1 offenders will expire and they will drop off the radar just as our children are returning from their holiday vacations. I call on our state lawmakers to immediately return to Albany to address these critical issues,” Legislator Stern said. “Nothing is more important than protecting our children. Our children cannot wait until next year for action.”

“Our laws must afford communities and victims of sex crimes protections from those we know pose a risk to their safety,” Laura Ahearn, Executive Director of Parents for Megan’s Law said. “The Court of Appeals decision stripped Counties across New York from protections provided by County lawmakers through their implementation of sex offender management initiatives. It is my honor to stand with Legislator Stern, and County and State Lawmakers to advocate for Counties across the State to have their legislative power restored.”

“Suffolk County has a responsibility to protect its children from sex offenders, and we have been stripped of that power,” said Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. “I urge the New York State Assembly to clarify legislative intent and give control back to the local governments that are closest to the communities they serve. Let us protect our kids.”

“I’m calling upon the Governor and the Assembly majority to call us back into special session so that we can take the necessary steps to give local governments the ability to restrict these sexual predators” said Assemblyman Andrew Raia, (R-East Northport, 12<sup>th</sup> A.D.)

“Many of us are enjoying our summer vacations,” Legislator Stern said. “Our children are on vacation from school, our state legislature is not in session. But sex offenders don’t take vacation. We cannot have our most vulnerable children at risk when they return to school in September. I call on our state representatives to get to work now to protect our children.”